

## **Independence**

Growing up as an only child and being a young girl was difficult than usual, especially being raised by an extremely strict father. At first my father and I were not as close as me and my mother. However this changed when I reached my teenage years. My father grew up in Brooklyn, New York which is known for a lot of crime, in which he used to get into being raised there. There were many things that he had done in the past that he regrets but learned from his mistakes and made better of his life. All of the lessons and morals that I have learned growing up came from the stories and talks that I had had with him. Whether they were talks when I got in trouble or even talks when we would just be sitting down and watching movies together, he always had something new to teach me. The most important lesson that he had taught me was to be independent and a hard worker, to not depend on anyone beside myself.

The one moment that really sticks to my memory was when we had one of our talks. It was in the middle of summer on a hot and humid day. My mother was a work and at that time I now have a brother and sister, whom are spending the day at my grandfathers house. I walked through the door cranky from working all day after a long shift from working as a housekeeper at a resort names Woodloch Pines. My hair all up in a bun, in my work uniform and all sweaty from work, I started complaining about how I wanted to make more money but I did not want to work a lot of hours because I wanted to enjoy my summer. As soon as my father heard me

complaining, the next thing I knew I heard my father yelling “Cassie” as he was sitting in the living room. The only thing I thought of was “Oh great here comes another one of these talks again.”. I walked into the living room to see him sitting on the couch right next to the air conditioner, wearing a tank top and shorts.<sup>1</sup>

When our conversation first began, his voice was so monotone that I began to get bored of it fast. However, as we began to sit down and get into the conversation I began to enjoy the talked we were having because it really made me look at life in a different aspect. My father told me to stop complaining about working while I was so young because many kids that were my age at that time did not have jobs or did not know what it felt like to buy their own items, such as their own car. As I sat there and thought about it, I began to realize how much more I appreciated everything just because I bought almost everything I had with my own money and it was not just handed down to me. This taught me the value of being a hard worker.

Then I began to complain to him about how I wanted to have fun that summer but I could not do that and work a lot of hours at the same time. He then told me “Cassie, you are fourteen years old, if you work hard now you can retire while you’re still young and have the rest of your life to have fun and party without worrying about money.”<sup>2</sup> After having this talk with him, these lessons that he had taught me have stuck in my mind every single day from that point on.

He mixed both of those lesson together and began to tell me how I should never depend on anyone to just hand things down to me and that I need to work for what I have. My father made me realise that as long as I worked hard enough I can accomplish whatever I wanted without having to depend on anyone. As years went on throughout my life, more and more

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<sup>1</sup> ADAPT (Appearance)

<sup>2</sup> ADAPT (Dialogue)

lessons he had taught me stuck to me also. However, sadly in February of 2014 my father passed away without any warning.

After my dad passed away I became really depressed and thought about everything that he had taught me. I felt like I then had no one to turn to or talk to about things, it was the worst feeling knowing that my dad, role model and hero all in one was gone. I then had to find someone who I could talk to and trust from that point on.

Growing through the hardship of my dad passing away and stressing about leaving for college I knew I had to find someone else to talk to and look up to at this point. Besides my father, my Aunt Nicole was another important person in my life. She had the same mindset as my father and viewed life the way that he would. My aunt is around my dad's age which is the mid 40's and also grew up in New York. My aunt and I had some talks here and there but not that many because we were always busy.

June came around and it was time for me to come to Bloomsburg University to begin the summer session. At this time, I had a boyfriend from whom I have been dating for two years now and things were great for the most part. I remember going into college my Aunt Nicole had told me to not depend on my relationship and also that college makes many people change. Being so naive, of course I did not listen to what she had to say at that time. I mean I knew that I should not depend on my relationship at that time but I did not think college would really change anything.

A few months of college went by and it is now in the middle of fall semester. Things between my boyfriend and I were not that great anymore. He began to become very aggressive

and became abusive, also he was not loyal or respectful to me at all.<sup>3</sup> At this point I was more depressed than anything, I felt like nothing was going my way. Losing someone that I loved recently and then my boyfriend at the time treating me like that began to take a huge toll on my grades at college. This lead me to a moment in my life that I could relate back to what my dad had told me about being independent and hard working.

I was in my dorm room on a cold winter night, crying about everything that was going on around me. I then thought about my Aunt Nicole because I knew that calling her would be like in a way, calling my father. I called my aunt and as soon as she heard me crying, she began to talk to me and the moment I heard her calm, soft voice I began to calm down.<sup>4</sup> I sat on the phone with her for about two hours that night having a deep conversation about everything. Then, just like my father, she began to tell me that I need to put all this negativity aside and become independent and work on my school work and to focus more on myself for now. I felt like I was talking to my father all over again. That very moment I realised how important my school work was for my future and also how important it was so let some things go in order for my health and safety. I began to see a pattern between these two important people in my life and they both became my role models, the people who I would look up to when I was feeling down or needed advice. They both taught me the same two lessons I feel like anyone should learn growing up.

I see me in the future now, walking into my welcoming home to see my husband and children hanging out together. Now that I am home after a day at work I am ready to cook dinner for my family and make sure that they are well fed. Sitting at the dinner table, we all share stories about our day and discuss anything important.

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<sup>3</sup> ADAPT (Treatment)

<sup>4</sup> ADAPT (Action)

While sitting at the dinner table I begin to talk to my children about how important it is to be independent. Maybe I will even try to convince them to get a small part time job when they turn 14 or 16 so they will know what it feels like to make their own money. When they look at me and their father, or my husband sitting at the dinner table they will be able to tell how happy we are together. As we eat dinner I see myself looking up at my fathers picture as well. As i'm looking at this picture it gives me a feeling of accomplishment knowing that I have done what would make him happy all through the years.<sup>5</sup> My husband and I both have a great job that has a steady income, therefore we are financially stable. Being in this economy, we may have some issues with money, however we will overcome anything that is thrown at us with a positive attitude. I do not depend on my husband to pay for my bills however, such as my own car payments, since it is in my name. I want that feeling of knowing something is mine and that I worked for it. As we finish dinner, we clear the table as a family and spend quality time together as well and make the best out of everything.

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<sup>5</sup> ADAPT (Point of View)